



Uterine Cancer

Uterine cancer is unfortunately very common in female rabbits with up to 80% of rabbits developing cancerous changes in their uterus from 2 years of age. Adenocarcinoma is the most common form of uterine cancer and is usually a slow progressive disease that spreads locally within the abdomen first. It may also develop to involve the lungs, brain, skin or bones. Some studies show that around 30% of cases also have mammary gland disease. Uterine cancer can also predispose your rabbit to urinary tract infections. There are also other forms of uterine cancer that can occur with some conditions being benign.

We recommend the sterilization (desexing) of female rabbits ideally between the ages of 4 - 6 months old to prevent uterine cancer. If your rabbit is older than this then sterilization is still recommended.

If uterine cancer is thought to be likely after your rabbit has been examined then an exploratory laparotomy (surgery) may be recommended. Radiographs (x-rays) of the chest are also often recommended as this is a common area that the cancer spreads to however these may not always show up early changes. The exploratory surgery allows us to assess the mass for removal and to also assess for spread of the cancer within the abdomen. We recommend sending off the excised mass/tissue to an external laboratory for histopathology testing to determine the nature of the diseased tissue and also to check for margins of the removal.

If there is evidence of spread of cancer to the lungs, this unfortunately means that surgery is not generally a treatment option and your pet's prognosis is unfortunately likely very poor. In these cases, palliative care is available in the form of oral pain relief as necessary which helps to keep your rabbit comfortable.

If you are at all concerned about your rabbit or have any other questions please don't hesitate to get in touch with us.

